

# John 1:1-18

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[0:00] At Campgrounds of America for about five years and over the last eight months or so probably in not so healthy way. But I was led because of that to this passage where John equates the word Jesus with the eternal creator, right? But the second reason, which is probably a little bit more personal to me and probably to some of you, is that over the last five years as we were working for a KOA, I felt, and I've been saved since I was 23, so almost 13 years, I felt so busy with work. We worked so much and I felt the truth of Christ start to slip away from my grasp.

And it's such a shameful thing to talk about that we could, or I could, you know, forget what Christ has done, who Christ is. And John, he wrote this book so we would see Christ and comprehend who he is and what he has done for us.

But let's start by reading the passage. It says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made, and him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness about him, and cried out, this was he of whom I said, he who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me. For from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side. He has made him known. Let's pray. God, we thank you so much for who you are.

We praise you for the work on the cross. We praise you that you are the Word become flesh. I pray, Lord, that we would see this portrait that John so vividly portrays to us of Christ, Christ, and cling to it. That we would not let this slip away from us. That we would believe and keep believing. Lord, I pray that you would just be glorified and magnified through this Word.

[4:17] Lord, I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So John writes with a specific purpose, and he gives us that purpose in chapter 20 of this book.

It's his thesis statement, his purpose statement, and it says in verse 30, Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

So this purpose is where I want to start. It's my purpose. I want us to see Christ and believe. Not only believe, but keep on believing and cling to the truth of Christ.

So the first thing as we read this passage in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The first question that comes to mind is, who is the Word?

So in this passage, John reveals to us the identity of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He begins with a title that is not often used in Scripture. It is only used by John in verse 1 right here, and verse 14, and then again in Revelation chapter 19, which is also written by John.

[5:44] So John is revealing to us what took him so long to truly believe, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, that he is the one to which we owe all praise and honor and glory, who can bring us into the family of God.

So the first thing that we want to point out is, who the Word is. It is Jesus. But why is John referring to Jesus as the Word?

So John calls Jesus the Word. So John calls Jesus the Word, and we know he's referring to Jesus because later in the passage of verse 14, John says, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.

Glory is of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. There are around 150 claims of Jesus being the Son of God in the gospel, just in the gospel of John alone.

So we know the Word that John is referring to as Jesus. So, the Word is God's gracious disclosure. A person's Word is how they communicate what they are thinking.

[6:59] So this title that John gives points to the truth that it is of the very nature of God to reveal himself. God is transcendent. In other words, he is exalted and above and beyond us in every aspect of our being.

He is holy, different from us to the point that we would never be able to comprehend his nature and character unless he condescends to reveal his nature and character to us. He reveals himself in multiple ways.

He reveals himself in nature. In Psalm chapter 19, The heavens and the earth declare his glory. He reveals himself by the prophets in Scripture. And then finally here, He reveals himself through his Son, Jesus Christ, the Word. In the Scriptures, God reveals to us who he is because he wants us to know him and be known by him.

In the book of Hebrews, the author tells us that long ago, and many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

[8:06] So the author of Hebrews is telling us that in the past, God has revealed himself to us through the prophets of the Old Testament. And these prophets have revealed to us God's character and nature in a very clear and important way.

But now finally, he has revealed himself perfectly and fully through his Son, Jesus Christ, the Word. Jesus says the Word uniquely, and this is the important part, Jesus says the Word uniquely and perfectly discloses to us the true character of God in the flesh.

To the point that we can say that what God says or does, Jesus says or does. Jesus says and does. They are one. So in this passage, and I want to stick very close to what John says here, John reveals to us that the Word has a unique relationship to God.

So he is the sovereign creator. It says, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And so this phrase right here, three words, in the beginning, should automatically cause us to look back to Genesis, right? Genesis chapter 1.

[9:21] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. So right off, first three words, God is equating the Word with the creator God.

In verse chapter, or verse, in verse three, it says, all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. So in Christ, all things are made.

Without him, and he ties this into a little bow that cannot be untied, without him was not anything made that was made. John solidifies the words, unity with God, not simply as a created being, but as the uncreated creator, right?

So by way of logic, we can conclude that everything was created, everything that was created, was created by Christ, right?

He cannot create himself, therefore, Jesus is the eternal creator. John is communicating with us that Jesus is the uncreated creator, the eternal God.

[10:41] So in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And even this word that is translated in the English Bible as word, this verb, as was, points to Jesus' existence as eternal.

He uses it again in John chapter 8 when Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, and he says, before Abraham was, before Abraham came into existence, I am.

So he's saying here, this is the eternal, the creating, the one who created all things, God. There's no question that can be had after this.

He also shows that the Word is in an eternal relationship with the Father. So, the Word has a unique relationship to God, He is the creator, the eternal creator, and He also has an eternal fellowship with the Father.

So John makes three claims. In the beginning was the Word. This shows that the Word is an eternal being. He was in existence before the creation. Then he says, the Word was with God.

[11:56] He existed, He exists as a distinct person from God. He also, in this phrase, the Word was with God, He existed in the closest possible connection with God.

He was, in other words, face to face with God. So this is a relationship that we cannot experience because Jesus is the eternal God.

He's totally different from us. So, the Word's unique relationship to the Father, or to the Trinity God, eternal fellowship with the Father, He was with God in the beginning, He's eternal, and He was God.

Jesus, John makes it very clear that not only is He with God, He was in the beginning, but He is God. And this kind of gives us somewhat of a picture of the Trinity, right?

That the Word is a distinct purpose, or a person, that the Word is in a very specific relationship, a face to face relationship with God, and that the Word is God.

[13:14] And that's often illustrated by a triangle with God at the top of the triangle, right? With the arrow pointing to the Son, saying that the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, and then an arrow pointing from the Son to the Spirit, saying that the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Son, and the Son is not God.

So we have a glimpse into that truth right there, right? John continues, piling on these truths, by showing the Word's exclusive claim to life.

And this is in verse 4, and Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. So, John moves progressively to creation as a whole, and now creation of life specifically.

So, the Word is the eternal God. He is the possessor of life. So, it wasn't something, life is not something that was given to God.

It has always been His. This is a claim that only the omnipotent, eternal God could ever have. So, it comes from Him alone.

[14:31] So, this life is in Him. It was not given to Him. He did not receive it. He always possessed it. But He's also the giver of life.

He's the giver of physical life. It's not something, physical life is not something contrived by men, right? Not something we thought of, not something we convince God to give us.

It is totally of God. It was a free act of the Word to create us for His glory. And, in Genesis chapter 1, or chapter 2, it says that, I should have, I should have marked this, but, so, in Genesis chapter 2, when no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land and there was no man to work the ground and a mist was going up from the land and watering the whole face of the ground, then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature.

So, this is the Word. The Word is the eternal God. So, but he also, and John starts to make this shift from physical creation, from the creation of all things, to the creation of life, and then to a spiritual side, right?

So, the Word is also the giver of spiritual life. And, this is a double meaning. So, both, and this comes from verse 5, so, or verse 4, So, this is a double truth.

[16:28] The light shines in the darkness and that's what happened in creation, correct? Light shined in the darkness and the darkness fled from it. It did not overcome it, but also, on the spiritual side, the light, Christ, shines in sin-darkened men's hearts and produces spiritual life.

So, again, this, the spiritual side of life is not, again, something contrived or earned by man. Ephesians 2, 8, and 9, for by grace you were saved through faith. It is totally and completely from God.

Ephesians chapter 2, and I'm going to read that. And you were dead in the trespasses and sin in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of God like the rest of mankind.

But God, but God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ.

[17:58] So, John, in these first five verses, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. John is showing us the Word's unique relationship to God.

He is the eternal creator. He's not a creation. He's showing that the Word's exclusive, has an exclusive claim to life in creation.

He created all things. He spoke it. It's his. He's the giver of life, of both physical and spiritual life.

And then he steps into history, into our history, and he introduces John the Baptist.

And he shows to us the words noteworthy witness in verse 6. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him.

[19:13] He was not the light but came to bear witness about the light. So this is a divinely appointed person. And I mentioned this before but it says, verse 6, there was a man.

And this mimic, this verb mimics the word in verse 1, in the beginning was God. And there's a contrast here right between God, between Christ, and between John the Baptist.

It's translated the same word was, the same verb was, but they're two totally different words in the Greek. So what he's saying here is, there was a man who was created, who came into being, sent from God.

He is not the light. He is not the Christ. He is not the Son of God. And evidently at that time, and we can see later on in verses 19, that people are starting to think that John the Baptist was actually the Christ.

And John is going to great pains to let everyone know that that's not true. that John is a divinely appointed person. So there was a man who came into creation named John.

[20:24] And then contrasting verse 1, in the beginning was God. And he was always there. He was eternal. So the words, noteworthy witness is John the Baptist.

He's a divinely appointed person. And he has a divinely appointed purpose. He is a witness to the light. He's not the light. He's a witness to the light. And John emphasizes this in a couple different ways.

Just here in verses 6 through 8, three times John uses the word witness. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to bear witness about the light. He was not the light but came to bear witness about the light.

It's also emphasized by John's character in this story. Everywhere we see John, he is bearing witness to the Savior, bearing witness to the light.

In verse 15 of this introduction, it says, John bore witness about him and cried out, this was he of whom I said, he who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me.

[21:27] And then in verse 19 through 23, and this is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you? He confessed and did not deny but confessed I am not the Christ.

And then in verse 29 of the same chapter, the next day he saw Jesus come toward him and he said, look, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me comes a man who ranks before me because he was before me, bearing witness to the light that he was eternal.

I myself did not know him but for this purpose I came baptizing with water that he might be revealed to Israel. And John bore witness. I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove and it remained on him.

I myself did not know him but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, he on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God.

And one more time in chapter 3. He bears witness in verse 30. He says, He must decrease but I must increase.

[22:44] He's saying this of himself. And he says, He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard yet no one receives his testimony.

Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this that God is true. For he whom God has sent and utters the words of God for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God remains on him. This is the natural response of someone who is clinging to the truth of Jesus Christ.

and as I said I felt for five, seven years as we worked with KOA that this truth the identity of Christ the person of Christ his work was just slipping away from my grasp and from my mind from my heart and I found myself falling into sin so easily and just October Alice and I left KOA they provided a housing for us and so we lost our house and we moved in with the Beals which was a great experience for us.

We were there for I think almost two months and during this time was when I separated from work and that mindset of just constant work and started to look for Christ and it seemed like every day in the Beal household Christ was constantly just before that family and it made such an impact I think on both me and Allison and it reminds me that this is the natural response of someone who is clinging to the truth of Christ.

[24:44] They are going to be a witness they are going to be a light to the great light and I think that's that's a great application that we can take from the person of John if there's a character in the Bible apart from Christ that I want to be like it's John and it's John the Baptist who constantly points to the Savior.

But then as we go on as John goes on it says in verse 9 the true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world he was in the world and the world was made through him yet the world did not know him he comes to his own and his own people did not receive him but to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God.

So we see a divided response to this witness and it's somewhat ironic that the light is coming into the world right and there are people who don't see it he needs a witness I mean when you walk into a room in the dark and you turn on the light the only people that don't see that light are those who are blind right and we see that there is a divided response here the world did not know him it should have the world was his creation Christ spoke them into being but the world did not know him he came to his own people he came to Israel and they did not receive him they had been planned they had been looking forward to the Christ for thousands of years since Genesis chapter 3 they've been looking for the man who would crush the serpent yet they didn't recognize him they rejected him but there were some that did receive him and believe and it says but to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God so some did receive and believe him and those who did believe were given the authority to become children of God and this is a picture of of the doctrine of adoption and adoption is God's goodness at work bringing sinners into an inheritance instead of the punishment due to him and it's a beautiful doctrine and I think it's probably somewhat

of a neglected doctrine but in adoption

God grants new privileges and a new inheritance and one of these one of the greatest privileges of our adoption is being able to speak to God and relate to him as a good and loving father right so we can now pray like Jesus taught us our father who art in heaven and we can realize that we are no longer slaves but we are sons and John Frame the theologian he said this certainly it is true that God is our creator he is our judge he is our Lord and Master he is our teacher our provider and predictor and the one by his providential care sustains our existence but the role that is the most intimate and the role that conveys the highest privileges of fellowship with with him for eternity is his role as our heavenly father so what a privilege this is that we see that when we put our faith and put our trust when we believe in Christ we are adopted into the family of God so the fact that the infinite God omnipotent eternal son of God could become man and join himself to a human nature forever so the infinite God became one person with infinite man will remain for eternity the most profound miracle and the most profound mystery in all the universe so John he shows the word the true and final revelation of who God is

God's character he shows us that that the word has a unique relationship to God that he is the eternal God we see that in creation he is a sovereign creator he has an exclusive claim to life he is the possessor of life that is not something that we can say he is the giver of life specifically spiritual life and it says again but to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children who were born not of blood nor of the will of flesh nor of the will of man but were born of God and this does bring up the mystery of God's sovereignty and man's free will but it's so clear that salvation is of God it is from him and then we see the example of the noteworthy witness in John the Baptist and then a divided response and the privilege of adoption and so again

[30:11] I want us to cling to these truths of Christ who he is and what he's done and verses 14 and 18 we're not going to get to but verse 14 has to be read again and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth so the God who created all things who gives us life who is the is the possessor of life also became flesh so this truth is so hard to grasp but it's so beautiful how can we even comprehend the love of God the grace of God it just doesn't make any sense to me he became flesh taking on flesh he humbled himself even to the point of death on the cross and so I know that right now there's some heavy things going on personally in the life of this church

Alice and I have both been dealing with difficult things but and we see all the time Christians or people who claim to be Christians leaving the faith and I think the important thing for us to do to protect us from that to protect us from letting Christ slip away is to understand these truths right so what more can I say than cling to Christ cling to his word cling to his truth cling to his character his work becoming work becoming man paying the penalty for our sins on the cross cling to these so let's pray Lord we thank you that you are good and gracious God we thank you that you loved us so much that you became flesh you humbled yourself to the point of death on the cross so that we could be adopted into your family

I pray that that these truths would take hold of us that we would cling to them and that we would believe that you are the Christ the son of God and through that receive true abundant eternal life we worship you you are worthy of all glory and honor I pray that you would just produce in us a faith that lasts in the face of anxiety and fear in the face of anger in the face of temptation please produce in us that faith that clings to you through sickness through death in all aspects of life and we thank you so much we pray these things in Jesus name

Amen